

same absurd plan for 'training' nurses—medical lectures, which induce the pupils to practice medicine rather than nursing, which they have not learnt!"

According to Dr. Hamilton's account, conditions in the French hospitals must indeed be hideous, and, with the example of English, Dutch, and German trained nurses right at their doors, we must think that the real explanation is to be found in deep-rooted professional heartlessness and jealousy of woman's work on the part of medical men in France, rather than in the mere ignorance and subordination of religious nursing orders.

---

## LETTERS

---

### BRUGES.

If any nurse wishes to see an ancient and historical nursing order exactly as it was in the Middle Ages still at work in an institution of venerable antiquity, where beautiful architecture, quaint old buildings, and a most charming old-time garden form the setting for hospital wards of fairly modern type, let her not fail under any circumstances to go to Bruges and visit the Hospital of St. John, under the care of the Augustinian order of Catholic sisters, where the sweet side of religious nursing may be seen. It is a most fascinating old place, hidden away from the world behind high stone walls and the partly ruined remains of old church buildings, carved gateways, and stone corridors. Inside to the left is the oldest part of the buildings,—over seven hundred years they have been standing,—once the hospital but now serving as the cloisters where the sisters live. This ancient part is composed of long, slightly curving corridors two stories high; on one side the corridor looks upon the gardens and on the other it opens into small rooms. Spotless cleanliness, bare board floors, and fresh, soft-tinted plaster characterize the place now—whether it was so seven hundred years ago one cannot tell. This part is separated by a large garden space from the central buildings, which contain the famous art treasures which are the property of the old hospital, and beyond this again is still more garden before one comes to the new hospital buildings, which were erected some fifty years ago.

These are on the pavilion plan, opening on a connecting corridor which traverses three sides of a large square; the fourth side, also corridor, connects with the sisters' quarters and gives access to the outer gateway. This square is simply one lavish bower of green. Trees, grass, flowers, and vines make the place look like a dream, and it is used for the recreation of the patients, who reach it from the corridor.

Outside the wards are large vegetable and fruit gardens, grape-vines, and flower-beds, reaching finally to the old stone wall which surrounds the whole place. A lovelier spot in summer could hardly be imagined.

The wards are ten in number and hold twenty-four beds each. They were bare and plain but very clean, the ventilation good, and the air fresh, although the beds were very close together. The beds and small tables were of wood, clumsy and plain, and the bedspreads were of dark-colored calico, while each bed had its set of rods and of old-fashioned dark calico bed-curtains. Modern science had exacted enough plumbing and drainage to make everything quite satisfactory from the working standpoint (and they showed us all their closets and corners), although homely and plain.

There was an atmosphere of peace and serenity, and the patients looked content. The men patients smoked on their corridor, and the women had their little belongings about their beds. The whole place had a home-like feeling, and though the work may not have been up to the modern idea in many ways, one

could not but feel that the patients were kindly treated. The sisters had kind, good faces, and several younger ones seemed to be flying about and working diligently. No medical school is connected with this old hospital, and "orders" are probably of the simplest.

Mrs. Fenwick and I, who went about together, both agreed that there was something very lovely and consoling about the religious sister, and that, if she could only have the *knowledge*, combined with her sweet seriousness and freedom from modern flippancy and brusqueness, she would be quite perfect.

The dress of the St. John Sisters is very picturesque; it is a coarse serge of ivory color, and when on duty this is turned up over a black petticoat. A large, dark-blue gingham apron is worn over this, and removable oversleeves of ivory serge. There is a black stole, and the white linen cap has very stiff, wide wings, and thrown over these a thin black gauze veil.

In the old City Hall there are some paintings showing scenes of the fifteenth century, and in one a Sister of St. John is seen in this precise dress, except that she has not the dark-blue apron or oversleeves on.

The pharmacy of this old hospital contains treasures of wood carving that make one quite miserable with envy—medicine-chests and sideboards covered with most wonderful carvings of old-time hospital scenes. The pharmacy is in charge of a sister who is a skilled pharmacist and a very dignified and imposing woman.

To the world in general the hospital is famous for its art treasures, which attract there hundreds of tourists. Grant Allen, in his "Cities of Belgium," refers to it thus:

"The Hospital of St. John, one of the most ancient institutions in Bruges, or of its kind in Europe, was founded not later than 1188. . . . It derives its chief interest for the tourist from its small picture-gallery, the one object in Bruges which must above all else be visited. This is the only place for studying in full the exquisite art of Memling, whose charming and poetical work is here more fully represented than elsewhere. . . . Many of these pictures were painted for the institution, which they still adorn, so that we have here the opportunity of seeing works of mediæval art in the precise surroundings which first produced them. . . . Hans Memling . . . was born about 1430. . . . The hospital possessed an important relic of St. Ursula,—her arm,—and about 1480-90 commissioned Memling to paint scenes from her life on the shrine destined to contain this precious deposit. The chest, or reliquary, which he adorned for the purpose forms the very best work of his lifetime."

Grant Allen does not say, but one of the sisters told Mrs. Fenwick and me, that Memling had been a patient in the hospital, and after his recovery made this exquisite painting through gratitude.

In another picture of Memling's in the hospital, the "Adoration of the Magi," a figure is represented as looking in a window at the scene, dressed in the same dress and yellow cap worn to-day by convalescents in the hospital.

L. L. D.

#### EXTRACTS FROM MISS BUTCHER'S LETTERS FROM SHAN-SI, INDIA

"We have our meals very oddly divided here, so that when you give a medicine 't. i. d.; p. c.," I do not know when you would give it. The natives have only two meals (when they can afford as much as that). We have 'little breakfast' when we get up, breakfast at eleven, tea at four, and dinner at seven-thirty. . . . Dr. Ernst was called to see a patient in the city and I went with her. We found a girl of sixteen, dying of consumption, in a room about six